

VOICENEWS

Australia eliminated, Ben Stokes, propels England into the T20 World Cup semifinals

Australia eliminated, Ben Stokes, Ben Stokes scored a valiant unbroken 42 as England defeated Sri Lanka by four wickets to go to the **T20 World Cup semi-finals** on Saturday in Sydney, halting Australia's title defense. With New Zealand already qualified for the round of 8, England needed to win to join them in the final four.

They did it in a nail-biting finale with two balls remaining.

Australia would have gone through; if they had lost

When Sri Lanka reached 80-2 after 10 overs, they appeared to be headed for a large total. However, the aggressive **Pathum Nissanka** was dismissed for 67, and the team collapsed to 141-8 with Mark Wood getting 3-26.

In response, England sped to 75 points without a loss and appeared to be headed for an easy victory. But as Sri Lanka's spin attack put pressure on them, they fell apart and the game ended at 111-5.

Despite winning, England had to settle for second place behind New Zealand at the top of the standings. On Sunday, Group 1's future will be decided.

Australia's sputtering tournament came to an end with Sri Lanka's defeat; their championship defense never recovered from a crushing loss to New Zealand on the first day and then having to share the points with England due to rain.

Sri Lanka won the toss and requested that England field, knowing that the side batting first had won all five of the previous games at the venue during the World Cup. Sri Lanka hasn't defeated England in a T20 since 2014.

With a powerful six off Stokes' second ball and two more sixes off Wood in the third over, Nissanka made their intentions clear.

But when Kusal Mendis (18) attempted another boundary from Chris Woakes and Liam Livingstone held a catch close to the ropes, a determined 39-run opening stand came to an end. Although Dhananjaya de Silva (9) slogged at a slower Sam Curran delivery and was caught by Stokes in the deep, Nissanka continued to score runs.

At the half, they were up 80-2, but Livingstone took a simple catch to get rid of Charith Asalanka (8).

In order to surpass 1,000 T20 career runs, Nissanka reached his second 50 of the competition and ninth overall before stomping Stokes for six.

Adil Rashid's tight bowling, though, slowed the run rate and allowed him to eventually dismiss Nissanka, who heaved to replacement fielder Chris Jordan at long-on after a 45-ball inning. With three wickets falling in the final over, Sri Lanka never recovered its form, scoring just 25 runs off its final five overs.

In response, Alex Hales and Jos Buttler scored 70 runs off a six-over powerplay while slamming 11 boundaries.

When Buttler (28) and Hales (47) were dismissed in the span of three overs due to the spin of Wanindu Hasaranga, Sri Lanka gained optimism.

After Livingstone (4) recklessly lost his wicket with a slog and Harry Brook (4) was swiftly caught and bowled by De Silva, Moeen Ali (1) soon joined them in the pavilion.

However, Stokes maintained his composure as the wickets fell and, along with Woakes, led his team into the semifinals.

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